

**PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2005
HIGH SCHOOL**

Members Present: Robert K. Pagani-Chairman, Richard J. Cleary, Robert J. Clements, Vaughn E. Gerber, Mark A. Joyse, Barry C. Pinto

Others Present: N. DiCorleto-Fin Officer, D. Milanovich-First Sel, R. Packman-Supt of Schools, School Officials, Town Officials and Dept. Heads, Board of Selectmen Members, Board of Education Members, Center Fire Dept Members, Crystal Lake Fire Dept. Members, Residents, Reporter.

Chairman Robert Pagani opened the hearing at 8:00 pm. He introduced the Board of Finance members. He also introduced the First Selectman, Superintendent of Schools and Michael Scudieri, past chairman of the Board.

Chairman Pagani's message was that this budget is not every attractive. Taxes will have to be increased or the level of services will have to decrease. Holding the line on existing services will require an increase in taxes. The Board of Finance will look at this budget line by line and present a carefully thought out budget for taxpayers approval. The budget is ultimately determined by the voters. The Chairman will ask the Board of Selectmen to start up a Charter Revision Commission in the next fiscal year to look at duplication of services in the areas of finance, maintenance services and emergency services. He emphasized the need for cooperation among all areas of Town government.

The general government budget has held fairly steady. The salaries have increased as well as contracted services. The Boards Agencies and Commissions budget has increased due to the funding requests for the Plan of Development and amendments to the Zoning Regulations. This will be done in order to redirect and channel growth of the Town. The Public Works budget shows a deficit this year due to snow removal operations. Debt Service decreased \$43,000. Fixed charges are up about \$200,000. The Miscellaneous line has increased due to an extra paycheck next year because of the way the number of weeks in year falls. The Capital Improvements budget is \$1.4 million and will most likely be cut back. The Board of Education's increase is 8.49%. The Board of Education has had unprecedented growth and is feeling pressure from that as well as mandates from the State and Federal Government with no money to finance them.

The Board of Finance will deliberate on the General Government and Capital Improvements budgets on Tuesday, April 26 and on the Board of Education budget on Thursday, April 28.

Michael Gan, 16 Windmill Rd asked about Tolland's moratorium on building. Mr. Pagani stated that it is a stop gap/panic measure. He feels that it is better to work at this on a monthly basis. The Planning and Zoning Commission has agreed to meet twice a month to devote one meeting to the Plan of Development. In Tolland, they have a pile of papers from developers that rushed to get them in before the moratorium. There will be a large backlog after it is over. He does not believe that it is the way to go.

Nora Willis, 38 Crystal Lake Road, stated that she understood that Tolland put in the moratorium so that they could look at their regulations without the distractions and put in legal road blocks. Mr. Pagani stated that Ellington is doing the same thing but not in a panic mode. We need to direct our growth.

Mr. Pagani told the audience 82% of the tax revenue in Ellington comes from single family homes. The State of Connecticut has cut back their education reimbursement from 50% to 35% which is creating a tax increase for this year. The town needs to encourage commercial and industrial development to town.

Tom Palshaw, 120 Pinney St. asked whether the Crystal Lake Fire truck lease is in this budget. He was told that it is shown in the debt portion of the budget. Mr. Pagani also expressed his disagreement at how the truck was brought back into the budget after being cut by the Board last year.

Mrs. Ugolik, 28 Fairview Ave, asked about the miscellaneous figure. She felt it shouldn't be that much for salaries alone. Mr. Pagani stated that there is also funding for the GIS system in that figure. Mr. Scudieri pointed out that the capital reserve contingency of \$125,000 is also included in that line item.

Mr. Boothroyd, Hare Rd, stated that materials to fix the roads have been cut each year and he doesn't agree with that. He would like the Board of Finance to look at fire hydrants and whether the Town needs to spend so much on them. He feels the Town could put this money toward active fire equipment. He also stated his dissatisfaction at how the Planning & Zoning Commission has been doing its job. He told the Board that the price of oil will impact all the town does.

Michael Gan, 16 Windmill then stated that he thought the town was putting too much sand and salt on the roads. He felt that 15% budget increase was unreasonable and doesn't mind doing without some services.

Mr. Clements stated that the school additions were approved overwhelmingly, but when it came time to pay for the increases that resulted from the additions, no one was willing to pay. He felt that the Board of Finance acted responsibly on the budget in the past.

Mr. Palshaw asked about the Crystal Lake School well replacement. Superintendent Packman stated that the State of CT has determined that the present well is too close to the septic system and has put the town under a consent order to do something by September 2006. There will be two new wells dug that will accommodate any future expansion. Last year's budget was for planning costs and this year they have to be installed.

Mr. Gan then asked about the revaluation and how that will affect the budget. Mr. Pagani stated that some win and some lose but the mill rate will be adjusted accordingly. It will not affect this budget but the following year's budget.

Nora Willis asked about the tax abatement for citizens on fixed income. Mr. Milanovich stated that the additional tax credit has been approved by the Board of Selectmen and sent to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance will look at it during deliberations.

The Chairman closed the hearing at 9:15 pm.

Submitted by _____
Lori Smith, Clerk